



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CHICAGO VOTED “#1 BEST BIG CITY IN THE U.S.” FOR HISTORIC SIXTH STRAIGHT YEAR BY READERS OF CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER

Momentous recognition confirms Chicago's reputation as a world-class travel destination and comes on the heels of successful summer that saw travel approaching 2019 levels

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Choose Chicago today announced that Chicago has been named the Best Big City in the U.S. for the sixth straight year by Condé Nast Traveler through their 2022 Readers' Choice Awards. This award, which is voted on by Condé Nast Traveler readers, has been bestowed on Chicago every year since 2017 and is a testament to Chicago's enduring status as an exciting, welcoming and world-class travel destination. This unmatched recognition comes as Choose Chicago releases performance data from Summer 2022 which shows leisure and business travel approaching a full return to 2019 levels.

“There are so many reasons why Chicago is the Best Big City in the U.S. — we have world-class restaurants; top-tier hotels and meeting spaces; cultural institutions and entertainment venues that can rival the best in the world; and vibrant, diverse neighborhoods that make sure there is something for every visitor,” said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “Most importantly, our city is full of people and organizations that care deeply and work tirelessly to make Chicago the most welcoming and inviting city in the world. I want to thank the tourism and hospitality professionals that make this award possible year after year and the millions of visitors that keep coming back to Chicago to explore everything our city has to offer.”

“Condé Nast readers know what Chicagoans have always known...our city is the best in the nation,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Chicago has everything: picturesque lakefronts, extraordinary architecture, world-class museums, and the kindest people you'll ever meet — and yes, the best pizza, too. Here's to six years strong and many more to come.”

Each year, Condé Nast Traveler garners input on travel experiences from hundreds of thousands of readers to determine the winners of their Readers' Choice Awards,



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which is the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry. This year, more than 240,000 readers weighed in on their favorite American cities and Chicago was ranked first overall for an unprecedented sixth straight year — no other city has been voted Best Big City in the U.S. more than three straight times in the 35-year history of the Condé Nast Readers' Choice Awards.

“It is an incredible honor to once again be voted the Best Big City in the U.S.,” said Lynn Osmond, President and CEO of Choose Chicago. “This recognition does not happen by accident — it is a testament to the hard-working people that make Chicago an inviting and welcoming city. Winning this award for six straight years combined with the successful summer of travel we just wrapped up make it clear that the past, present, and future of tourism in Chicago is a bright one.”

“I want to thank our partners in the hospitality and tourism industry for ensuring Chicago is a world-class destination and for making this award possible,” continued President Osmond. “I also want to thank all Chicago residents for creating such a friendly and hospitable city for tens of millions of visitors each year. Finally, I want to thank the readers of Conde Nast Traveler for choosing Chicago year after year and for recognizing all the amazing attributes of our city that is second to none.”

“This unprecedented honor is a testament of how Chicago is continually evolving as a dynamic destination for everyone,” said Glenn Eden, Chair, Choose Chicago Board of Directors. “From our restaurants and hotels to our theaters, museums, neighborhoods, cultural attractions and sporting events, Chicago’s tourism and hospitality community brings world-class service, and experiences you cannot find in any other city. Without a doubt, Chicago is the Best Big City in the U.S. for six record-breaking years because we’ve been able to help the savviest travelers positively reimagine what to expect when visiting Chicago and any big U.S. city for that matter.”

In the summer of 2022, Chicago welcomed visitors back to the city in droves, with hotel room demand approaching, and in one segment exceeding, pre-pandemic levels. Total hotel room demand during the summer months (June, July, and August) exceeded 3 million room nights, which is nearly 90% of summer 2019 levels. Summer 2022 group hotel room demand, which represents rooms occupied specifically by delegates of large meetings and conventions, exceeded summer 2019 levels, with 1.06 million hotel room nights in summer 2022 compared to 1.03 million in summer 2019.

Chicago’s successful summer of travel followed the launch of the new When You Go You Know campaign in June. This campaign along with Choose Chicago’s summer



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messaging that started earlier generated more than \$150 million in hotel revenue between April 18 and September 5. Additionally, the campaign drove 8.1 million searches for hotels and 1.2 million searches for flights. Choose Chicago also worked with Expedia and the Chicago hotel community on a focused consumer campaign to drive room nights. The campaign ran from May 9 through September 5 and drove more than 63,000 room nights with an estimated hotel revenue of \$20 million.

Chicago's historic recognition as the Best Big City in the U.S. for six straight years is a testament to the resilience of Chicago's hospitality and tourism industries as the strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Condé Nast Traveler readers recognize that Chicago is home to world-class entertainment, impressive architecture, first-rate museums, and an exceptional restaurant scene. 2022 has been a banner year for events in Chicago as well, with the first-ever Sueños Festival in May and the first US Sail Grand Prix Chicago race at Navy Pier in June, not to mention the successful full return of Chicago mainstays such as Lollapalooza, the James Beard Awards, and the International Manufacturing Trade Show (IMTS), the largest and longest-running tradeshow in North America.

The 2022 Readers' Choice Awards are published on Condé Nast Traveler's website at cntraveler.com/rca and celebrated in the November issue. Follow @cntraveler on social media and tag #RCA2022.

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